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## **Media Release**

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### **Attorney General Biden, Senator Patricia Blevins, House Speaker Terry Spence, and Representative Pete Schwartzkopf announce introduction of legislation to implement the federal Adam Walsh Act and toughen registration requirements for convicted sex offenders**

**Dover, DE** – Today Attorney General Joseph R. Biden, III joined State Senator Patricia Blevins (D-Elsmere), Delaware House Speaker Terry Spence (R-Stratford), and State Representative Pete Schwartzkopf (D-Rehoboth) as they announced the introduction of Senate Bill 60, which implements the federal Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006 (“Adam Walsh Act”). The Adam Walsh Act aligns sex offender registry standards across the states, asks states to place the burden of proof on convicted sex offenders, and authorizes more than \$57 million in additional federal funding to aid states in their efforts to track convicted sex offenders and investigate and prevent sex crimes. Senate Bill 60 seeks to further toughen Delaware’s registration requirements for convicted sex offenders and stiffens penalties for sex offenders who fail to verify.

Implementation of the federal Adam Walsh Act will:

- Require convicted sex offenders to appear in person to register, re-register, or verify with the Delaware State Police.
- Reduce the amount of time a convicted sex offender has to register or re-register after being released on probation or parole from seven (7) business days to three (3) business days.
- Require convicted sex offenders to provide additional identifying information to authorities, including the offender’s social security number and vehicle registration.

Furthermore, this bill goes beyond the Adam Walsh act in two significant ways, by:

- Making it a felony for failure to register, re-register, or verify as required by law.
- Mandating that a warrant be issued immediately for the arrest of any offender who fails to register, re-register, or verify as required by law.

“This legislation places the burden of notification squarely in the hands of offenders, where it ought to be,” Senator Blevins stated. “The bill has real teeth. It makes these offenders more accountable to the State and gives law enforcement better information to protect our citizens.”



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If this legislation becomes law, Delaware will be one of the first states in the nation to implement the federal Adam Walsh Act. Passage of the Delaware act now makes the state eligible to immediately seek additional federal funds to more effectively carry out three critical law enforcement initiatives:

- (1) *tracking* and verifying all registered sex offenders
- (2) *enforcing* sex offender registration requirements
- (3) *educating* children and parents about safe use of the internet

“It’s critical that Delaware continue to access its full complement of federal funds made available through the Adam Walsh Act. Every dollar we bring in from Washington enhances our ability to track and verify these offenders,” Speaker Spence said.

“This legislation sends a message to sexual offenders throughout the state to register and verify, or go to jail,” noted Representative Schwartzkopf.

“A primary initiative of my office is to better protect all victims from sexual predators, and I believe that this legislation does just that,” Attorney General Biden said. “The get-tough provisions of this legislation will aid law enforcement in verifying and tracking Delaware’s sex offenders. The effective and ongoing registration and verification of these offenders is essential to the safety and security of all Delawareans.”

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